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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 02, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 02, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH / SABAH (GUNEY) / OZGUR GUNDEM / CUMHURIYET / BOLGE / EVRENSEL / HURRIYET: May Day celebrations in Adana were shorter than expected because of rainfall. A significant number of CHP (Republican People's Party) members and deputies reportedly participated, (approximately) 8000 people marched, and no incidents were reported. (Note: Bolge reports the number of participants as 3000. End Note.) Ozgur Gundem reports that celebrations in Adana and Mersin included calls for the end of military operations and the start of democratization processes. The police reportedly detained five people in celebrations in Batman and one person in Siirt. Tension surfaced in Diyarbakir between police and a slogan-chanting group of people who rejected the designated May Day site, 13 kilometers away from the city center. May Day celebrations in other cities were reportedly peaceful.

RADIKAL: Cetin Nuhoglu, Chairman of the International Transporters Union (ITU) in Turkey, stated that the opening of a second border gate at Habur in Sirnak is on ITU's agenda. According to Nuhoglu, President of Iraq Jalal Talabani was receptive to the idea of a second border gate. Nuhoglu also noted that for security reasons, "Vehicle Monitoring Systems" have been installed on 3,000 ITU-member trucks that travel to Iraq.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: The people of Dicle district in Diyarbakir collected 6000 signatures in a bid to name a newly built street in Dicle after President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, who served his first judgeship there. Sezer, who on principle has not accepted having places named after him, amicably rejected this proposal.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Thirty-eight organizations that formed the Religious Freedom and Freedom of Expression Initiative in Sanliurfa held a press announcement to protest the head scarf ban and restrictions on freedom of expression.

CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Thirty members of the Christian community celebrated Easter in Diyarbakir's Virgin Mary Church. Red eggs, representing "Christ's resurrection," were distributed during the ceremony. Separately, CHP members reportedly participated in Syriac Easter celebrations in Kirkklar Church of Mardin. Easter celebrations are being held in Antakya Orthodox Church as well. The celebrations are due to last three days.

CUMHURIYET: CHP's "Commission for Assessing the GAP Project's Current Situation and its Future" is looking into the issue of fields that have been mined in Nusaybin district of Mardin. The Deputy Chairperson of CHP's Parliamentary Group suggested that after de-mining activities along the Syrian border are completed, the areas cleaned up could be cultivated by cooperatives or distributed to low-income villagers for cultivation.

HURRIYET: The police reportedly apprehended 35-year-old Nazmiye Erkal, who traveled by bus from Diyarbakir to Izmir with five kilograms of "RDX-type" explosives. Erkal reportedly served a prison sentence previously for membership in a terrorist organization, and was released last October when provisions of the new Penal Code allowed her an amnesty.

HURRIYET: Runway maintenance will be conducted on the three-kilometer runway of Incirlik Airbase. Flights at the base have been cancelled for two weeks for this reason.

BOLGE: In a party meeting in Adana, MHP Deputy National Chairperson Ali Isiklar reportedly stated that an alliance formed by "circles (note: later specified as mostly EU) that have problems with Turkey" is politically oppressing Turkey and imposing psychological pressure. He also reportedly noted in the meeting that Christian missionary activities are as jeopardizing to Turkey's unity and solidarity as the activities of the terrorist organization, PKK.

EKSPRES: A columnist writes about Erkan Mumcu's trip to Adana for his April 30 political rally, his first as ANAP (Motherland Party) leader. According to this columnist, a number of AKP

(Justice and Development Party) members, who had been members of ANAP previously, were among the participants at the event. They likely are dissatisfied with the policies of their current party, he writes, and wanted to see what impact Mumcu would create.

EKSPRES: Another columnist from Ekspres states that Mumcu has come to Adana after taking many risks. First, he left a party which has been governing Turkey with 34.5 percent of the votes; second, he has chosen one of the biggest cities of Turkey for his political public debut as the ANAP leader; third, he decided to plan rallies although no election period is likely in the near future; lastly, Mumcu preferred an open-air public address. Unfortunately heavy rainfall ended just a few hours before the rally.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. HURRIYET / YENI SAFAK: The conditions of the sale of 51 percent of TUPRAS (Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation) have been settled. The buyer will reportedly have to pay half of the price immediately and will have the option to pay the other half in two years with a 7 percent interest rate. The buyer will not be allowed to shut down the Batman refinery, according to these reports.

REID